

newdirections

June 2008
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serving Evangelicals and Catholics seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith

Manchester

Extensive coverage of the Report
its options and the implications

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AM PLOC OPEN AIR CHURCH FASAIG, LOCH TORRIDON

Am Ploc (The Lump) is a narrow strip of
land projecting into Loch Torridon, at the
head of the loch by the Village of Fasaig in Wester
Ross. The stones were set to form an open air
church, used by the local Christian community -
probably Free Church of Scotland - during days of
persecution. It is still capable of being used, but
only by the very hardy!

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The next issue of **newdirections** is published on 1 July

The Manchester Report is a strikingly serious piece of practical theological writing. Its chairman and members have done more work than was perhaps expected, and produced a text that is impressive in its depth. Even the most committed follower of the process surrounding the introduction of women bishops will need to read it carefully more than once.

Realistically, we know that this will not be the case. A dense and carefully argued report, seeking to lay out a wide range of opposing options, is a challenge too far for many. One crucial element therefore is how it will be simplified, by the Bishops, the Synod and in the wider Church of England. Far more people will have an opinion on it than will ever have read it. This is perfectly normal, but it does pose an undeniable challenge.

Let us be absolutely clear, therefore, that the women bishops issue is not like an industrial dispute. It is not the case that two opposing sides, both making mutually contradictory demands, must (through patient negotiation and astute political manoeuvring) be brought to a compromise.

It is not like an industrial dispute, and nothing is gained from loud, public statements and demands. It is not an arbitration procedure that is needed, nor will any show of power advance a solution. Both sides must recognize that, for all their convictions, they are in the minority.

The publicly declared opponents of women bishops are a very small minority within the Church of England. The proponents of women bishops are a very small minority within the worldwide Church. Neither side, therefore, should seek a trial by strength.

Neither side can seize what it wants, for the very act of taking will destroy what is sought.

For ourselves, we know that we cannot take what we want, we must be given what we need, by a majority within our church, a majority that largely dislikes and even despises what we believe in. This is a lot to ask, and we must continue to be gracious to those who would much rather we did not exist.

The greater challenge, however, rests with the confident majority. On the face of it, they can simply take what they want, without the need for any concessions to anyone. And yet, of course, it is not like that.

No one can seize the Holy Orders of the Church. It is not a question of strength, nor even of justice; it does not matter if you have the majority and the power and the will; it makes no difference if you have the weight of

secular thinking behind you. The Holy Orders of the Church are not by their very nature capable of being seized.

There is a real danger, for those who (not unreasonably) want women bishops in the Church of England, that by grasping too ferociously, they will destroy the very thing they seek. Sacramental assurance can never be seized: it can only be received. It is by its nature a gift.

Even the most ardent liberal knows that the Orders of the Church are not of our own devising, that there is a givenness, to Episcopacy in particular, which takes them beyond our own desires and designs. They have to be shared within the Church, and can never be seized, even by the righteous.

This means that the majority must generously concede what they dislike to people they may dislike, in order to safeguard the very thing they most want. Let us acknowledge that this will be hard to do.

We must, as those who still believe what was always believed, pray that the innovating majority get what they want – for they can only do this, by giving us what we need.



Will Lambeth 2008 prove to be a turning point for the Communion, or just another talk-fest, producing little that is either important or relevant? It is probably too early to say. But two things are clear: that, however deftly its organizers strive to avoid it, Lambeth will be dominated by the Gene Robinson media circus; and that the absence of many who will be attending the GAFCON alternative in Amman and Jerusalem will seriously weaken Lambeth's ability to speak for the Communion as a whole.

Hats off then to those who will be attending both conferences, building bridges and witnessing to both. Archbishop Venables, of the Southern Cone, has acted courageously both in his (and his Province's) willingness to give shelter to North American traditionalists, and in his decision to go to Canterbury. In a recent exchange of letters he has shown that he is eager and willing to take on the bullying tactics of Katharine Jefferts Schori.

By his attendance at Lambeth he will signal that he, and those who have left The Episcopal Church to join him, are as validly and wholeheartedly Anglican as any establishment liberal. In doing so they will be keeping alive the inclusive spirit of Lambeth 1998, Resolution III.2. **ND**



Long awaited report

If you have not yet read the Manchester Report James Patrick will lead you through the options and the many questions that its conclusions pose

the Group is concerned that there should be mutual flourishing of those on different sides in the debate; we should all be sensitive and generous

On 22 August 1485, the Lancastrian forces led by Henry Tudor met those of the Yorkist Richard III on Bosworth Field in Leicestershire. The battle that followed saw the defeat of the Plantagenets, the rise of the Tudors, and brought an end to the thirty-two year War of the Roses. 523 years later, within yards of that battle field, the House of Bishops is meeting at the time of writing, considering the Report of the Women Bishops Legislative Drafting Group chaired by the Bishop of Manchester [GS 1685].

The motion which brought the group into being recognized that those who assent to and dissent from the ordination of women as bishops are loyal Anglicans. It invited the church to continue to reflect on and debate the issue. It asked for the creation of a group to prepare legislation to make it happen, and also to establish legal provision for those who in conscience cannot accept this development, whilst at the same time maintaining the highest possible degree of communion.

This was to be submitted to the House of Bishops for consideration and submission to Synod. What the result of those deliberations will be, it is impossible to guess, but it will not be an end to the debate, which is only just beginning. But time is short: from publication to debate at the July Synod in York is only ten weeks.

There is much to rejoice at. Whereas the report in 2006 of the House of Bishops' Women Bishops' Group [GS 1605, the Guildford Group] was felt by some to be unsatisfactory and complicated, yet vague, the Manchester Report identifies issues, looks at problems directly, and asks clear questions.

We start the debate knowing that the issue will not disappear. Of course, as the report identifies, some of the opposition to the ordination of women as priests has dissipated. Those for whom it was simply a novel idea have had concerns banished by experience. But others continue to express doubt over a development which is not shared with other Churches.

The period of reception has not been completed, they say: it is still just beginning. Even now, over 900 parishes have passed at least one resolution, and over 360 have so far petitioned for Episcopal Oversight, whilst more (in Blackburn, Chichester and Edmonton, for example) have yet to have need to do so. Petitioning parishes may number less than 3% of the total, but if grouped together would be the eleventh largest diocese, bigger than Peterborough. Men continue to offer themselves for ordination. Opinion is still divided. How, then, does the broad Church of England move forward?

The first real question the report asks is, does the Church actually want to make any provision at all to protect those who object conscientiously to the consecration of women? Many who would answer, no. Over 700 women priests recently signed a letter to

that effect in *The Times*. The Report reminds us such a move would repudiate earlier assurances. As Professor David McClean said in 1993, the Synod resolved to protect incumbents and parishes 'in perpetuity for as long as anyone wanted it... there are no time limits left... the safeguards will be there...' It is on the back of these safeguards that people have remained in post, in their parishes, and been ordained.

Justice demands that there should be provision. Anything else would mean the Act of Synod was a Trojan Horse. Were there no provision, the effect would be dramatic. Many parishes and clergy would feel badly let down. It would trigger a period of uncertainty, with clergy and people leaving, which in turn would diminish the breadth of the church, making it the poorer theologically at the same time as affecting it financially. How would it fit with the resolution of the 1998 Lambeth Conference that those who dissent from the ordination of women are 'loyal Anglicans'? No wonder the report asks just how committed the Synod is to securing provision for opponents of this legislation. We must pray that it is.

And if it is committed, then the Report asks what form this provision might take. We should give thanks for the language which is used. The Group is concerned that there should be mutual flourishing of those on different sides in the debate. We should all be sensitive and generous. There should be no discrimination.

It is important to remember in all this, that none of the options offering various structural solutions are designed to be set in stone. Whatever solution is offered to a parish that cannot in conscience accept the ministry of a woman bishop (or of a male priest ordained by a woman bishop) need not last for ever. Parishes must be able to move in and out of any of these new structures. The word used is 'permeability'; divisions are meant to be flexible, not impermeable barriers.

As Christians, called to make disciples of all nations, our mission of taking the Good News of Christ to the world should be at the heart of all that we say and do. So to enable that mutual flourishing, it looks at what the options are, and even suggests four new solutions, which are to some extent a re-working of the Guildford Group's 'Transferred Episcopal Authority' idea. It is with those four solutions that we shall start.

All four solutions involve what is termed a 'complementary bishop' (who would be a similar species to a PEV) who would act as the delegate of the diocesan bishop. In the first three variations, in fact there is no *transfer* of episcopal authority at all: it is *delegated*; not TEA but DEA.

In variation one, what we know as Resolutions A and B would no longer exist. A parish could not opt out of the ministry of women bishops and priests on theological grounds. There would though be a code of practice to which a diocesan bishop would be obliged 'to have

regard'. After the diocesan bishop has had regard to the code, she (or of course he) could if she chose delegate certain powers to the complementary Bishop. Equally, he or she might not choose to delegate.

Variation two is like the first, but with the possibility of passing each of the two resolutions. Again, there would be a code of practice to which the diocesan bishop would have to have regard and she or he could, if she or he so chose, then delegate certain functions to the complementary bishop.

Variation three is yet more complicated. Again, the resolutions may be passed, but here, instead of a code of practice, there would be legislation requiring the diocesan bishop to delegate certain functions to the complementary bishop, failing which his or her refusal could be challenged in court.

Variation four, though, is more like TEA. Again, resolutions may be passed, but where they are, a parish is not actually transferred to the complementary bishop. Instead, certain limited specific responsibilities for priests and parishes for certain parishes would transfer to the complementary bishop.

All this would be entirely new, needing measures and codes. But there are other solutions investigated. A Religious Society (like those found in the Roman Catholic Church, most notably Opus Dei) and a Peculiar Jurisdiction (like Westminster Abbey), like Aunt Sally, are put up and knocked down.

Given more attention are new special dioceses. Proposed are probably three dioceses operating in the same way as the 'historic dioceses' relating to the General Synod, with their own boards of education, and finance. The report is concerned that the historic dioceses will have holes in them, supposedly like gruyere cheese. Perhaps it worries too much: a parish on a diocesan boundary can cope even though the next-door parish is in a different diocese. Many dioceses have schools, hospitals, barracks, dockyards, colleges and peculiars like Westminster Abbey or Bristol's Lord Mayor's chapel and still manage. Holes are not nearly as uncommon as we might think.

Finally, raised up to be knocked down is a new province, like that proposed in *Consecrated Women*?

There are so many to choose from. What are we meant to think?

Perhaps we should start with asking ourselves, what is the effect of the consecration of women as bishops? If we do, the answers become clearer. The traditional Anglican understanding of the local church is the bishop gathered with his clergy and people. His deacons assist him; his priests act for him. His people gather around him; he is the focus of unity. If a woman is consecrated as a bishop, are her orders valid? How can we be sure that the sacraments that she administers are valid? If there is doubt, how then can she be the focus of unity?

What effect, in turn, would this have on the unity of the House of Bishops, where what makes us Anglicans is that we are Christians gathered as the local church around our local bishop who is in turn in communion with his fellow bishops? Fracture a part and we fracture the whole. The importance of this cannot be overstated by loyal Anglicans.

Is this just an argument for provision? Of course, but it is more than that. It highlights the difficulties which each of the new variations present. For a

moment, we can gloss over whether a code of practice is enough, and simply ask what 'a complementary bishop' is going to be prepared to operate? Would we be expecting the bishop to do more than we ourselves are prepared to do? If the answer is yes, then the next question is, why should we ask it of them? And this in turn might lead us to wonder who would do it.

If a parish cannot accept a woman as bishop, how can it expect the complementary bishop to accept her? The role of Archdeacon might be able to be split between the sacramental priesthood and the legal duties of the Bishop's officer, but a bishop is different. The focus for unity cannot easily divide into functions, some of which are gender-specific and some of which are not.


Perhaps, though, this does not persuade you, and you think it might work. In which case you must consider the codes of practice. We must ask, what is being provided: is it a life-line or is it terminal care? Do the proposals enable parishes to grow in the Spirit, or will they bring about irritation, and division? Codes of practice exist in many fields. There are codes of practice for example for the arrest, detention and interview of suspects by the police. The majority operate them fairly, but not all. Where they are not, what is the sanction?

Codes work best when there is the goodwill to be accommodating and generous. Where there is already irritation and division, they are dangerous. How will it work, with a parish needing provision, working with a woman bishop? What will it be like for a woman bishop to relate to a parish which doubts her very orders? Experience suggests that codes can be flouted, but rules are obeyed. They provide certainty, and the freedom which comes from this.

So is it terminal care, or are loyal Anglicans to be allowed mutually to flourish? If they are, then there needs to be certainty: sacramental certainty. There cannot be doubt about whether a person's orders are valid, or whether the sacraments they administer are valid. There needs to be an end to discrimination simply on the grounds of sex.

The simplest solution in fact would be the creation of a new province. It would remove the irritation. It would mean a few more holes in a diocese. It is important to remember in all this, that none of the options offering various structural solutions are designed to be set in stone. Whatever solution is offered to a parish that cannot in conscience accept the ministry of a woman bishop (or of a male priest ordained by a woman bishop) need not last for ever. Parishes must be able to move in and out of any of these new structures. The word used is 'permeability'; divisions are meant to be flexible, not impermeable barriers. But it would mean certainty of orders: those within the province would have it, and those in the historic dioceses would have it. Both sides, in their own sphere, would have the certainty they need. On this basis, they might work together more easily and with greater respect than is currently expected.

So we return to Bosworth Field. We know what the Manchester Group has offered. What will the Bishops bring to Synod? Time alone will tell.

We can do no more than pray that when this battle is ended, the Church of England will be allowed to grow and flourish. 

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A united call for a forty day cycle of prayer and fasting for preparation

The Global Anglican Future Conference is taking place in Jerusalem from the 22nd to 29th of this month. More than 1000 Anglican leaders from 17 provinces, including 280 bishops, will be taking part. With a stress on prayer and pilgrimage, to the holy sites of Our Lord's incarnation, it will focus on mission, and be an important (and interesting, one might also say) precursor to the Lambeth Conference.

For many within the Anglican Communion it will be a valuable corrective to the liberal compromise that threatens to engulf Lambeth; for others it will be an alternative.

Forward in Faith throughout the world is joining the other organizations within the Common Cause Partnership, such as the Anglican Communion Network and Anglican Coalition in Canada, in a forty day cycle of prayer and fasting preceding this meeting of bishops and representatives from the worldwide Anglican Churches.

It began at the end of May, and will

continue through to the conclusion of the Jerusalem conference.

In the words of the Bishop of Quincy, the Rt Revd Keith Ackerman SSC:

Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to extend his Kingdom and to keep his commandments. GAFCON brings our focus upon the implications of the Great Commission; we come together as ministers to carry out our Lord's directive. I hope every member of Forward in Faith will be part of lifting up each body and each person who will be coming to Jerusalem that we be 'moving in the Power of God'.

The bishops have specified that the Daily Office, the Great Litany, and the Psalms of Ascent (120–134) be used during this season. The Psalms of Ascent were chosen because of the impact they had on the Global South meeting in Nairobi out of which GAFCON was born. The Common Cause Partnership is posting these resources along with reflections, Scripture readings and collects at <http://prayer.united-anglicans.org>.

As Archbishop Akinola said earlier in the development of GAFCON,

The conference is called by those members of the Anglican Family who see themselves as orthodox Anglicans, who are upholding the authority of Scriptures, and believe that the time has come to come together to fashion the future of our Anglican family. This has to be done within a theological framework.

What are the challenges? Why are some people deviating from the orthodox faith? Why are they allowing modern culture to overwhelm the word of God? The conference will be highlighting the Lordship of Jesus Christ over his church and over the world.

We must also look at the Church of God in our time and the whole area of its mission: what is God doing in our time, responding to the needs of our time, e.g. Aids, poverty, corruption, good and bad governance. We are going to use that conference to address all these issues. **ND**

The Romans had a saying: 'To solve a problem, go for a walk!' The Benedictines have a saying: 'To work is to pray.' As I prepared a seedbed in the vegetable garden, I was reminded of both of these *bons mots*. The truth is that the mind and will often need the rhythm and attention of physical work before the heart has space to pray. Physical activity can make room for the heart to rest and be in God's presence. Contemplative prayer need not necessarily be accompanied by physical stillness – action can be a door into the light of the Divine Life.

In my case, the spade or garden fork is a tool for prayer. Thirty years ago, the gardener of the neighbouring allotment to mine once remarked, 'You always turn something up when you're digging.' For me, it is often something of God's word and wisdom that I have been too busy to take hold of and hold in my heart. It is as if digging the soil and pulling out the couch grass is being mirrored in my heart and mind. There is often a release of physical tension and energy in physical work that is the precursor to a more receptive disposition to the work of the Spirit.

Ghostly Counsel Work & Prayer

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

Some of this tandem activity of body and soul is related to the capacity for attention. Attention is the ability to give total commitment to listening to the still small voice; the ability of the will to remained fixed on the reality of God can be strengthened by attention to a physical task. We often talk about becoming 'lost to the world' when engaged in a physical activity. It may be that this experience of lostness – this vacuum of mental activity – is a place where the penetrative grace of the Spirit can bring its light. I do not pretend to understand this relationship between engagement with our Creator through engagement with his creation, but I know from my own experience that

it is a real and living one.

It can be helpful to use physical work as a medium for other kinds of prayerful engagement with God. I am thinking particularly about intercession. If I have a burden of prayer for someone or for a particular situation, I will offer a piece of work with an intention for that object. It could be cleaning a floor or hanging out the washing, mowing a lawn or cutting a hedge. I use the mental space that the work provides to open my heart and will to the heart and will of God. This seems to me to be a more profitable way to plug the mental and emotional gap than plugging in my MP3 player or listening to the radio.

The same goes for journeys – I often dedicate a journey to a time of particular intercession. For readers who struggle to be prayerful in a pious way, all this may come as a merciful get-out! I am not advocating the abandonment of 'studying to be quiet', but I am saying that the Lord who called the fishermen as they mended their nets may also speak to you in the peeling of potatoes. Remember Herbert: 'Who sweeps a room as for thy laws makes that and the action fine.'

Humble gathering

Thomas Seville CR offers a monastic perspective on the prospects for the Lambeth Conference suggesting that the very intensity of disagreement and division may prove to be a cause of hope

Few Lambeth conferences have attracted so much attention in anticipation of their gathering as the one which will meet next month in Canterbury.

Attention will be given – in spades by commentators – to issues which have caused a breakdown in relations both between and within some provinces of the Anglican communion. Such issues include the degree to which Lambeth 1998 I.10 is recognized, and the continuing fallout from the ordination to the episcopate of Gene Robinson. There will also be time for the discussion of the proposed Covenant, which has arisen from a proposal first made in the Windsor Report.

The subject of our prayers

It is not these issues which should be the main subject of our prayers for this gathering. However important they are, they are not the *cause* of our present malaise; I would venture to say that the crisis owes more to a failure in attention to God's gift of himself to us and how this gift meets us in each other. (Some would say that it is simply a matter of not following what is clear in Scripture. If I were to allow that, however, I would still argue that the failure which underlies acting on a reading of the Scriptures is a failure in that love which binds together, *caritas*, Christian love. Without that love, Scripture will always be read badly.)

It is, therefore, a welcome change to the pattern of earlier conferences that this one will begin with a retreat of two days, a time when attention to God may be given special place. A retreat means that the bishops will also be able to examine their own needs and those of their churches and to seek counsel. Lambeth will major on learning and listening in the humble context of being met by God; on Word, not on resolutions.

Humility and unity go together, one might say. Indeed this conference is to be time for meeting God – an 'essentially spiritual encounter', in His Grace's words – and that is surely a proper priority. Lambeth is a consultative, not a legislative body, of course.

The pressures under which fellowship in the Communion suffers have made it difficult for some to talk and others to listen. The failure to listen may be seen

as part of that failure to attend to God – there are different views on how that failure has taken shape – and so it is right that the conference should be a 'back to basics' for the bishops.

This will not lead to a remedy of the divisions, but what might occur is *some* listening, and *some* talking might be fruitfully essayed. This kind of listening is not about getting us to 'come round' but about listening to God in the things one fears, to what is still there which is of Christ and of God.

Listening and obedience

The breakdown has been a failure of deep listening, or what the monastic way has called 'obedience'. Such obedience is understood as an honouring of

the breakdown has been a failure of deep listening or what the monastic way has called 'obedience'

my brother or sister for the sake of Christ and thus is a deep listening which is directed towards God in the first place. Such listening happens when we 'obey' our neighbours. This means welcoming their difference from me, when difference is there. It means a readiness to learn and to be changed, not the work of a moment. If I am right, this Lambeth may be a place where that gift of obedience may be desired where such a desire was not really there before.

Terms of reference exist for those coming to Lambeth which do presuppose matters in common. Those invited are assumed to be basically sympathetic to Windsor and the Covenant; or at least not in principle hostile. The differences are still great. There will be 'ordained' women with the responsibilities of bishops.

There will be those who come from churches which have among them those who have ignored Windsor and acted in ways which seem to others to be unchristian; there will be some bishops who will differ strongly from others on issues of faith and order.

This is the terrain on which we live and it is only on such a terrain that the practice of listening, learning and conversion, of *Christian* obedience, becomes real or makes sense; only when diversity is real can obedience to God take its messy and real root.

Sharing a common good

One of the assumptions behind any gathering of Christians is that there is something fundamental in which we share, even if it can seem hard to express that perfectly. I would hope that the language of the grace of being called by Jesus Christ is something that can be commonly owned, for example. There is a good which is shared, and there is a community which is commonly owned, the Church. To some it may seem surprising that this has to be stated of Lambeth, but it does and it is a truth which needs to be said.

Having this Lambeth says that there is such a thing as a common good to be shared and to be lived. At present it may be difficult to state with perfect clarity the content of that common good, but if we come to state it with more clarity, then it is one of the good purposes which the Covenant may serve.

It is not something which may be engineered and some may think all this is too airy fairy, but I do not think that it is unrealistic. Lambeth is host to churches with sharply contrasting perspectives. Perhaps there is no hope of a common good, no hope for mutual obedience for the sake of the one Lord among the churches which are part of the Anglican family. That is a desperate view.

As I suggest, the call to obedience to God's Word usually meets us in places where there is real difference. So, to bring such perspectives to a place where things which are shared may be discovered is not something to be seen as a last redoubt.

It also neglects the world to which we are sent, the world to which the Church is to be a sign of God's rule and means of life, not death. Our prayers for Lambeth should be ardent, for the graces sought, of the bishops being better bishops, and for a church more willing to listen at depth to God.

There is no better time than when things are tricky to ask for the confidence to be followers of Christ. **ND**

Everything nothing

Matthew Bemand reflects on the nature of priesthood and the events leading up to his ordination a year ago, and offers encouragement to others who are thinking of embarking on the same journey

What are you, O priest? Nothing and everything' – I first encountered those words, from a poem attributed to St Norbert, in Archbishop Ramsey's classic little book, *The Christian Priest Today*. At my ordination to the priesthood, nearly one year ago, I heard them again in the homily preached by Bishop Keith. The night after it had happened, I remember lying awake wondering whether it had really worked – I knew in my heart something had happened, but in my head I could scarcely take it in.

As I reflect on the past year, I am aware that I am fundamentally the same person, albeit a little wiser, I hope, from the various situations in which I have been involved. The changes on being ordained deacon were more obvious: wearing clerical dress, being called 'Father', living in a new house, doing a new job, getting used to new routines, and so on. The only obvious difference in becoming a priest is being able to celebrate Mass. And yet this is not merely a skill that is acquired, or a new function I am permitted to carry out. It is at the very heart of priestly identity.

Hearing God's call

The vocation of a priest is indeed to take the Gospel out into the world, to care for and to evangelize God's people wherever they may be. Nevertheless this vocation can only come to fruition if it is rooted in the service of God at the altar, for it is at the altar that the priest fulfils his vocation to make Christ present to his people. It is because the priest stands *in persona Christi* at the altar that he is able to stand before God on behalf of his people and intercede for them, and to bring Christ to the people outside the church building.

All the baptized already have a share in the priesthood of Christ. It is the work of every Christian, not just the ordained, to make Christ present in the world. It is also the responsibility of every Christian to be attentive to God's calling and respond to it, whatever that calling may be. There are many different ways of serving God in the world and in the Church, and he has a unique purpose for each one of us.

Those of us who are called by God to the ministerial priesthood, instituted by Christ to serve his Church, are called as

individuals who are already living out their baptismal priesthood. I gradually recognized my vocation over a number of years. Having been brought up in an Anglo-Catholic church, where as a seven-year-old I began to serve, thoughts of vocation to priesthood were quite natural; still, it was only really when I went away to university that I came to a clear realization that this was what God wanted of me. I went to a selection conference in my final year and was not recommended for training: with hindsight that probably was a fair decision.

A privilege

I am sure I have benefited from the few years I spent teaching instead, even though I knew it was not what I was meant to be doing long-term. I certainly

the mark of true priesthood is humility, rather than status seeking

have no regrets about getting married during that time! When I went to my second conference, it felt 'right' in a way that it did not the first time around – I was more mature and more confident. And so, after three years at St Stephen's House, I came to serve my title amongst the people of Brentwood. I share this with you not merely as a piece of self-promotion, but to encourage those who are at the beginning of a long journey of discernment and those who have met with obstacles on the way.

In a sense, then, the priest really is 'nothing' – nothing more than a baptized human being created in God's image, used by God in a unique way as a means of bestowing grace upon his people through the sacraments. Those who clamour for equality in the priesthood and episcopate tend to overlook the implication that the ordained priesthood is 'better' than the baptismal priesthood – a higher status that all should be able to aspire to. To be used by God in this way is an enormous privilege and there is a dignity attached to the office of priest, but this dignity truthfully belongs to all the baptized.

The mark of true priesthood is humil-

ity, rather than status seeking. Standing as Christ's representative at the altar certainly changes the nature of a priest's relationship with God, but it doesn't necessarily make it better than anyone else's. Priests should, of course, aspire to holiness of life, and they have a responsibility to lead by example, but the priest is able to represent Jesus at the altar because God has decided to use him in this way, not because of any merit on his part.

A gracious gift

There is another sense, though, that the priest is 'everything', because the Mass is everything. In that moment when the priest stands at the altar *in persona Christi*, he is able to bring to God all the joys and sorrows of the people to whom he has ministered. The protestors who gather by the pump at Walsingham will insist that we have no need of priests to mediate between us and God, but they have missed the point. Christ is our only mediator, but he has given us various ways of receiving the grace which he mediates to us, above all through the sacraments and through our participation in the communion of saints.

It is wrong to talk of 'my' priesthood, or even to talk of the priesthood as if it belonged to one particular administrative unit of the Church. The priesthood belongs to Christ, and is his gracious gift to us. So it is indeed 'everything', at the same time as being 'nothing' when regarded from a human point of view.

During the forthcoming ordination season, I urge you to pray for all God's priests, especially those who are at the beginning of this awesome ministry, for we certainly need your prayers. Pray too that all people may discern and follow their unique vocation and especially that men may hear and respond to God's calling to serve him as priests.

One final thought: all of us have a duty to encourage others in their vocation as well as discern our own. God may be calling you to be a priest, or he may be calling someone you know who just needs a nudge in the right direction – it's not too late to book a place on the 'God Calling?' Vocations Conference at St Stephen's House, 12–14 September: visit www.godcallingvocations.org.uk/ for more information and a booking form. **ND**

The simple solution

John Shepley acknowledges that the Manchester Group had to resolve two contradictory requirements but suggests that one of their own options is the easiest solution to both

What was the Manchester Group for? The question seems a strange one until its mandate from the July 2006 Synod is examined in detail. It was a convoluted motion, rendered more so by two contradictory amendments:

That this Synod, endorsing Resolution III.2 of the Lambeth Conference 1998 *'that those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans'* and believing that the implications of admitting women to the episcopate will best be discerned by continuing to explore in detail the practical and legislative arrangements:

(a) invite dioceses, deaneries and parishes to continue serious debate and reflection on the theological, practical, ecumenical and missiological aspects of the issue;

(b) invite the Archbishops' Council, in consultation with the Standing Committee of the House of Bishops and the Appointments Committee, to secure the early appointment of a legislative drafting group, which will aim to include a significant representation of women in the spirit of Resolution 13/31 of the Anglican Consultative Council passed in July 2005, charged with: (i) preparing the draft measure and amending canon necessary to remove the legal obstacles to the consecration of women to the office of bishop; (ii) preparing a draft of possible additional legal provision *consistent with Canon A4* to establish arrangements that would seek to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with those conscientiously unable to receive the ministry of women bishops; (iii) submitting the results of its work to the House of Bishops for consideration and submission to Synod; and

(c) instruct the Business Committee to make time available, before first consideration of the draft legislation, for the Synod to consider, in the light of any views expressed by the House of Bishops, the arrangements proposed in the drafting group's report.

An impossible task?

The conflicting amendments (italicized above) created problems. Supporters of the ordination of women were confident of the meaning of Canon A4, and supposed that it effectively undermined Lambeth 98 II.2. Opponents were equally convinced that Canon A4 was merely hortatory, and in any case had a purely historical significance, with no effect on Lambeth 98 II.2.

The purpose of the Manchester Group, given the self-contradictory tenor of its terms of reference, was to square the circle: to deliver women bishops whose remit would be exactly the same as that of male bishops, whilst ensuring the fair and equal treatment of those who could not in conscience receive their ministry. Despite seeming a near impossibility, it appears that one of its numerous options – that of creating separate dioceses for those opposed – has come close to the mark. To understand how close, we need first of all to examine the obvious deficiencies of the other possibilities.

Manchester's first option – simple legislation with a non-statutory code of practice – is clearly the one least likely to achieve the desired end. It would, of course, deliver what the proponents want; but at what cost! The removal of safeguards and assurances claimed at the time to be permanent and immutable would openly reveal the deceit and subterfuge to which, in 1992, sup-

porters of women priests and bishops had been ready to stoop.

Not would such an arrangement fulfil the requirements of Lambeth 98 II.2. Codes of Practice, in this matter, are notoriously malleable in the hands of those who are unsympathetic to them; have been short-lived wherever they have been introduced; and often demonstrate a grotesque misunderstanding of the needs and concerns of opponents.

Flawed solutions

In short, they exist more to bolster the self-esteem and liberal credentials of those who frame them, than to meet the sincerely held convictions of those for whose purported benefit they are introduced.

But if a single clause measure with an attendant Code of Practice does nothing to satisfy opponents, the options which involve, in differing ways, the creation of 'complementary bishops' to minister to opponents seem to me to demand too much of the women who will be consecrated. They would be obliged to sanction (or have imposed upon them) a new species of episcopal life whose sole function would be to impersonate them to those to whom their ministry was unwelcome. Those 'complementary bishops', part of the structures of every diocese, would be a constant reminder to every woman diocesan of the limits on the exercise of her ministry. These new-fangled bishops, moreover, would be opposed to women priests and bishops and yet in full communion with the women prelates they were sent to impersonate. Inevitably the diocesan bishop would grow to despise the incoherence of their ecclesiology, and that of the parishes who sought their ministry.

A minor alteration

All these pitfalls are avoided by providing separate dioceses for opponents. Whatever Canon A4 means, it would still apply in all CofE dioceses; the position of the diocesan as ordinary would remain unaltered; women bishops would enjoy all the rights, responsibilities and dignity belonging to their male colleagues; and the national structures of the Church would continue to function as before.

The advantages of the solution are obvious. The creation of new dioceses is not a novelty in itself (as are 'complementary bishops'). The relationship between and among diocesans is well understood. Dioceses which do not ordain women to the priesthood or the episcopate simply continue a long-standing practice in the CofE. The only ecclesiological adjustments which would need to be made would be the partial abandonment of the nineteenth-century ideal of the 'territorial diocese'.

Such minor tinkering is a small price to pay for an arrangement which, whilst as permanent as needs be, could easily be withdrawn at a later stage, and which gives both parties what the General Synod voted for them to have: Lambeth 98 II.2 and Canon A4.

Some, of course, will say that the very existence of bishops who do not ordain or consecrate women is an affront to consecrated women; but this would be no substantive change in present circumstances. There is no foreseeable time when the Anglican Communion will not contain such bishops (at present a majority). To want to eliminate them is to cease, in any meaningful sense, to be Anglican. **ND**

Holy-huddle-ism

Julian Mann is sceptical about the potential impact of the impending Global Anglican Future Conference, and suggests that Lambeth provides a better opportunity for proclaiming a strong message

For western evangelicals and for those from parts of the Anglican Communion where orthodoxy is in the ascendant, such as Sydney, the question needs to be put: will GAFCON prove to be anything more than a holy huddle in the Holy Land?

Holy-huddle-ism is unfortunately a modern evangelical disease. Evangelicals gather in large churches, usually in wealthier areas, often commuting out of their communities to get there, in many cases on their way driving past several smaller and struggling churches that they could help to turn around. In this, sadly, we evangelicals take our cue from our leaders.

Risk-taking

It was not always so, as Reform Trustee Jonathan Fletcher has shown in his masterly booklet, recently published: *Back to the Future: Reforming the Church of England – Learning from the Past* <<http://www.reform.org.uk/pages/bb/backto-future.php>>. In the eighteenth century, evangelicals were risk-takers who moved out of their comfort zones and took their cue from their leaders, men like William Grimshaw, Samuel Walker, John Berridge and Henry Venn.

Said Jonathan Fletcher: 'We must realize that what those evangelical heroes of the eighteenth century did was to go to funny little places and make them strategic through teaching the Bible, and if we want to win the country, that is what we must do.'

He continued: 'By the same token, it is rather sad that evangelicals have got a bad reputation of not going to Urban Priority Areas, such that when St Nick's Tooting was advertised as an evangelical church only two people applied for it. We will not win the country unless we can stick with those sorts of places.'

Church planting

The model that Holy Trinity Brompton in London has given us of planting in existing parish churches that are about to close and giving them new life is remarkable. We must not lose those opportunities.'

Based on his own experience, he had an interesting perspective on church planting, very much in the limelight in GAFCON circles: 'There is a very important place for church planting. We at

Emmanuel, Wimbledon, did that ourselves twenty years ago when we planted a church at Dundonald.

'I was summoned up before the bishops who were threatening to take away my licence. I took with me Brigadier David Stileman who knew how to stand up to bishops. He kept on calling the bishop 'General' – 'Bishop, you're our General, our Chief of Staff.' After a bit he said to the then Bishop of Southwark: 'See if I can put this very simply – I'm just a plain ordinary soldier: in doing this church plant, Emmanuel is trying to preach the Gospel, and you are trying to stop that – have I got that right?' The bishop did a sort of goldfish act and nothing came out.

good church discipline is surely like good comedy – it's a question of timing

'We must do church planting but, having said that, church planting can become a form of idolatry. I was very liberated at the Evangelical Ministry Assembly a few years ago, which was on church planting. Dick Lucas (former Rector of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, City of London) stood up and said that he was not a 'church planter', he was a 'church plodder', despite the fact that St Helen's provided one of the most innovative and effective forms of evangelism of the twentieth century.

Call to action

'We are all wanting to grow, but St Helen's wanted to give. People would come to the lunch hour service, and they would be sent back to their little, struggling, probably slightly unorthodox churches, and even some who came to our mid-week Bible classes were sent back to the churches where they lived.'

Mr Fletcher's prophetic comments have got under my skin – partly because I was privileged to prepare them for publication, based on his address to the Reform national conference in 2007.

As an evangelical Anglican minister in a small and previously non-evangelical parish church in the north of England, I

believe it would be much better for the cause of biblical truth, where it is being most desperately contested, if the orthodox bishops of the Anglican Communion came to Lambeth and by means of a published resolution declared themselves out of communion with The Episcopal Church and called for its expulsion from the Anglican Communion. That resolution would be backed by a refusal to take Holy Communion with the false teachers from TEC and their supporters.


'Oh, but we've already done all that and it's made no difference.' In respectful response: good church discipline is surely like good comedy – it's a question of timing. Lambeth 2008, the next world-wide gathering after Resolution 1.10, is the time to do it.

Comfort zone

Of course, this would be uncomfortable for all the orthodox involved, but as the Archdeacon of Chester, Donald Allister, so memorably put it in the 2008 Oak Hill Yearbook: 'As Jesus said (I can't find the reference right now), 'Follow me and I'll help you stay in your comfort zone'.

I cannot see how GAFCON will make any more impact on ordinary parish churches in the liberal-dominated western world than the large gathered churches and their church plants are currently making. Very little, because of holy-huddle-ism. If I have already got the virus, going to a conference of fellow-sufferers in the Holy Land is unlikely to cure me.

Meanwhile in the unholy UK, as the Gene Robinson Show comes to town, there is a media war to be fought for a Christian vision of marriage and the family, both for the sake of the Church and society. Why let smooth-talking Gene and his Stonewall PR machine win it hands down, pressing all the right post-modern buttons with his victim-status pleading and his spurious argument that the right to sin and call it Christian is a matter of equality and justice?

The sad reality is, because holy-huddle-ism is so deep-rooted in modern evangelical Anglicanism, GAFCON is unlikely to make much impact for our Lord Christ in those parts of the Anglican Communion where false teaching is at its most virulent; a public stand at Lambeth could. 

devotional

St Columba & the Breast of Peace

Chris Collins

John's Gospel and all John's writings are the closest of all, said Columba. 'There is no wall between. All is brightness there – clarity beyond belief – and now at last, no longer any feeling of separation from the Kingdom he saw coming down out of Heaven! Now at last, within the sight of Eternity, I have known what it is to rest upon the breast of Peace.'

With these words, Columba made his way to the Oratory and blessed his little community before the 'altar where the mysteries would be offered' and then collapsed and died into the hands of Peace.

The picture that Columba brings to mind is that of the Last Supper, when John the beloved disciple lay back on the breast of Jesus. What a privileged position to be in. Resting on Jesus is a paradigm of the Gospel promise of peace and security in the hands of God.

The Last Supper

That may well have been a haven of peace for the beloved disciple, but that breast upon which he lay, and the heart that beat within it, was far from peaceful. At the Last Supper, the enormity of the task of redemption was impinging on the mind of Jesus. He knew that this was his last meal with the disciples before he had to face his passion and death. The very words of blessing he used over the traditional common loaf and shared cup directed the attention of all in that

Upper Room to the theme of sacrifice and death.

And yet, surrounded as may be by so much foreseeable suffering and distress, that breast was a cushion of peace for John. Jesus could also see beyond the trials of time to the promise of Eternity even then breaking through. The bread may be his Body broken, but it was also a pledge that sins would be forgiven; the wine was a symbol of Blood outpoured in death, but also a sacrificial death by which his followers would call his future triumphant presence into their turbulent present.

In sight of Eternity

Surely Columba encourages us to see in the celebration of the Eucharist a precious chance to do what St John did at the Last Supper – to rest upon the breast of Peace. It was this Sacrament that sustained the Church and made her grow. This one link with the past is our assurance for the future life of our Christian faith and life here, and our link with all the blessings that await us beyond time. Most of all, the Blessed Sacrament gives us the opportunity to rest together on Our Lord's breast of Peace – to see the Eternity of God's promise in the circumstances of our time. Here we present our fears and reservations for the future in order that through the presence of Christ in his Holy Sacrament we might experience the hope that is gift from heaven.

So we rest awhile on the breast of Peace, for here we are, in Columba's words, in sight of Eternity. Our fears for the future evaporate in the overwhelming love of God, and we pledge ourselves to carry that love with us into all aspects of our lives, as apostles in our own generation testifying to the limitlessness of God's grace. **ND**



'Complimentary bishop, Sir?'

Reading the 39

In a recent Radio 4 interview, genial Gene argued that the OT's condemnation of homosexual practice had no more validity today than its dietary rules. Obviously his busy schedule promoting his autobiography hadn't left him time to read as far as Article VI, but, fair play, an academically distinguished former Bishop of Durham had given up before he got to Article IV.

If the death of Buddy Holly (3 Feb 1959 – Ordo compilers please note) was 'the day the music died', future historians will date the death of the CofE to when the ASB no longer annexed the 39 Articles. Bishop Conrad Noel used to say he learned the faith by reading the Articles during boring sermons. Today the Articles could be a prophylactic against interminable intercessions.

To get the best benefit from the Articles, they must be taken full strength, in the Latin version. Would that we hadn't also lost the requirement that clergy be found 'learned in the Latin tongue'. Such learning would have prevented a recent ABC believing that the use of 'congregation' in the English version of Article XIX meant that Anglicanism was the URC Mark 1. On second thoughts, perhaps he was prophetic, given today's Anglican congregationalism.

Gresham Kirkby, liturgical pioneer and CND militant, used to remind critics that Article XXXVII's Latin version only sanctioned participation in 'just' wars, the English version lacking the qualifying adjective.

However daft General Synod gets, there is solace in Article XXI – 'Councils may err'. Also, was there ever a better guide to the ambiguity required of working party reports than Article XVII on predestination? Environmentalists note: only one paragraph of paper. Brief. Not like reading lists shown me by some ordinands: bags of sociology and sexology. No mention of Bicknell or Griffith Thomas on the Articles.

Bin such lists. Bring back Bicknell. Add Ryle's *Knots Untied and Ritual Notes*, plus *Sporting Life* for moral theology. Reading list sorted. Now for that other list – the John Lewis one – an oak or mahogany bar for the office when I become the free province's first Director of Education?

Alan Edwards

Shared recitation

Mother Church begins her instruction not with the Bible but the Creed

Patrick Henry Reardon is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

Mother Church traditionally begins her instruction of the faithful, not by handing them a Bible, but by teaching them a Creed. In the Christian religion, recitation precedes reading. Indeed, we commence with a process of verbal memorization: 'Say after me...'

A witness to this method, a notable preacher in the fourth century, was St Cyril of Jerusalem, many of whose instructions to the new converts (or 'catechumens,' a term to be examined presently) have been transmitted as a part of the Church's heritage. Preparing his hearers to be received into the Church by baptism, Cyril first recited the Creed for them, directing them exactly what to do with it: 'I want you, please, to commit this summary to memory as I recite it. Rehearse it diligently among yourselves. Do not write it down on paper, but use your memory to engrave it on your heart' [Catechetical Lectures 5.12].

Several points, I think, should be made with respect to this important instruction.

First, the process did not begin with reading or writing. It was not a literary effort. In fact, writing the Creed down was explicitly prohibited. The transmission took shape, rather, by listening and repeating, with a view to learning the content by rote. The material was to go directly from the ear to the mouth; and the memory, thus strengthened, was to grab hold of it in order to fix it in the heart. There was to be an actual sound, a living word, a formula pronounced, heard, repeated, and memorized.

Indeed, the very term for this process, catechesis, means 'according to echo.' The 'catechumen' is literally an 'echoer,' indicating that the living word resounds (that is, 'sounds again') in the ears, is repeated by the tongue, and finally attains a round, full resonance in the heart.

Second, for Cyril this process was not private. It was ideally accomplished, rather, in a group. Since the content of the formula was the very faith of the Church, its proper context was

communal. Thus, he instructed his hearers to 'rehearse it diligently among yourselves.' The personal faith of the hearer – I believe – was not an isolated act. The believer received his faith from the Church, through her preaching and instruction, and he would live it within the Church. Other people, then, were integral to his personal faith and essential to the process by which he came to Christ. Conversion, in short, included conversation.

Third, the Church did not hand over the Holy Scriptures to a person until this catechesis was completed and mature, because such initiatory instruction provided the key to the correct understanding of the Bible. According to the traditional view of the Church, it is a risky business to read the Bible without the Creed, or rule of faith. Thus, St Leo of Rome, writing less than a century after Cyril, affirmed, 'Someone without the most basic understanding even of the Creed itself can have learned nothing from the sacred texts of the Old and New Testaments' [The Tome].

The reluctance of the early Christians to write down the Creed is probably the best explanation for its relatively late appearance among the Church's transmitted documents. There were references to the Creed before there were copies of it.

In its most primitive form, the Creed seems to have been chiefly Christological, based on the formula, 'Jesus is Lord.' However, since baptism itself was done 'in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,' a Trinitarian form of the creed was perfectly logical, inasmuch as the Creed's recitation was part of the baptismal rite. Our earliest witness to this development was St Justin Martyr in the mid-second century [First Apology 61].

For the reason we have already considered, the New Testament provides no direct evidence supporting my suspicion that the Creed's early development was indebted to Israel's *Shema*, which affirms the unity of God. Nonetheless, the Creed, in its full form given us by the Ecumenical Councils, still asserts that God is one and Jesus is Lord. **ND**

Sacred vision

Based, like many of his religious images, on the late fifteenth century wood-cut tradition, this Cranach of around 1520 is now in Budapest. It featured in the recent exhibition in Burlington House. Here the artist combines three traditional elements into a theological meditation on the justice and mercy of God.

At the top of the canvas the Father sends his arrows of destruction on mankind below: the plague is a visitation of God's righteousness on sinful humanity. The two images below mitigate, in their different ways, the savage retribution of the God of the Old Testament.

Jesus, here the Man of Sorrows, familiar from so many late medieval devotional prints, shows the marks of his wounds as he kneels on the instrument of our salvation, the wood of the cross.

Mary – the Madonna of Mercy – shields

humanity from the Father's wrath. Enfolded in her protection are kings and cardinals, rich and poor, male and female. All

Plague picture – Cranach

equally come under the Father's judgement and are in need of the Madonna's protection.

These three figures from an older iconography are placed in a landscape by which Cranach shows his familiarity with fashionable Italian models. But the painting as a whole owes everything to a thoroughly German tradition of devotional scenes intended to assist meditation and prayer in times of distress and suffering. It is a talisman against natural disaster, employing symbols well-known to the spectator.

The new art comes to the rescue of the old. What could have been merely formulaic is rendered poignant and immediate by the humanity of Cranach's Christ, and the wistful tenderness of his Virgin.

Mark Stevens



Seeking to be loyal

An edited first extract from a talk given by **Bishop Martyn Jarrett** to his SSC chapter, answering the questions 'What future is there for Catholics in the CofE and how might we be better prepared to meet it?'

Some Anglican Catholics like to talk as if there once were a golden age of Anglican ecclesiology and as if the whole thing were then irredeemably shattered by the admission of women to priests' orders in 1994. Those with a longer perspective on the history of the Church of England might like to reflect on other imperfections in its ecclesiology and indeed its orthodoxy, since the breach with Rome in the sixteenth century. Indeed, you and I might start with this very fact.

Few if any of us here today would, I suspect, want to say that a church not in communion with the Bishop of Rome, and which for many years labelled him as being Anti-Christ, was one possessed of a pure ecclesiology. The net result has been for the Church of England to take local provincial authority for things that rightly belong to the whole Church Catholic and not just to itself. Not being in communion with most of the Catholic bishops throughout the world, not least with the recognized ancient sees, would seem to suggest a major flaw in Anglican ecclesiology.

Compromised ecclesiology

There are, of course, many other glaring examples of our church being less than faithful to orthodox teaching and practice. We would be hard pressed to defend as Catholic the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. Many of us are embarrassed by the 1662 Eucharistic Prayer. For more than four hundred years the Church of England made no official provision for the Anointing of the Sick. Though there are the often quoted references to a priest being able to hear private confessions, not least in the Visitation of the Sick, the provision of guidance for carrying out such a ministry was strongly resisted until relatively recently.

Of particular significance is the fact that from 1549 until 1662 men ordained in the reformed churches of Europe were admitted to benefices in this country without first being required to receive episcopal ordination. Those in our church, who took the same view as we would on such matters and continued to serve within it, had to wait over a hundred years before the Catholic discipline relating to Holy Orders was restored to

the English Church.

Now, as then, folk who are unhappy with the current position of the Church of England have to decide whether to stay or to go, a much less costly decision to make nowadays, it has to be said, than at any earlier time in the history of our church since the debacle of the Reformation. You and I would seem, at least at first sight, to have more options at our fingertips than did some of our predecessors.

even western Catholic ecclesiology is not quite as tidy as some of its proponents like to portray it

I suppose, if we were to remain theologically comfortable with Anglicanism provided it were lived out within an orthodox province, we could all emigrate to Papua New Guinea or to some other part of the Communion that we deemed to be still orthodox. I have my doubts as to whether many of us would see that as a realistic option.

Some are attracted by the possibility of making common cause with one or another of the continuing Anglican Churches or even of forming their own. While I have some sympathy and understanding for those who have taken this course, not least in places like Canada where little or no provision has been made for traditionally believing Anglicans, that would not seem to be an acceptable way forward for me. Any authentic understanding of what it means to be Catholic must, to my mind, include the reality of being in communion with the rest of the Church.

Fractured communion

I fully accept that the reality of that experience has been fractured at various times within the history of the Christian Church. This is one reason for holding, as I do, that the Church of England never had a golden age when its ecclesiology might have been considered to be perfect.

It is important, too, to remember that Western Christendom lived through what we now call the Great Schism.

It may well be that the Church subsequently saw only one succession of the papacy as the authentic one. That same Church, nevertheless, has proceeded to canonize faithful Christians from both sides of the divide. Even western Catholic ecclesiology is not quite as tidy as some of its proponents like to portray it.

What is clear to me is that, were I to feel unable to remain any longer in communion with the Church of England, I would then seek out what I would see as a more authentic expression of the Catholic Church. I cannot see how it would be more authentically Catholic for me to help establish my own pure branch of the Church or to link up with someone else's venture along that path.

Received not taken

It is worth noting in passing that proposals for a third province established by the will of the Church of England would fit perfectly within this understanding of Catholic ecclesiology, but that the wild talk of *seizing* a third province and somehow establishing it despite the views of the Church of England would, to my mind, be to cross the barrier and become a continuing church and, arguably, a schism. I doubt I would want any part in it.

The more obvious possibility, of course, would be to depart for either Rome or Orthodoxy. Yet, for most if not all of us, this too is not without its difficulties. Each of us here today might nuance it differently but, nevertheless, you and I will have our particular reasons for not already having taken that step. To some extent, of course, this is because, as I have already noted, you and I have not, as yet, seen some overriding reason for leaving the Church of England.

The non-recognition of our Orders is not a matter to be taken lightly. Even those among us, who hold the highest doctrine of the Magisterium as exercised by the Roman Catholic Church seem able to sit somewhat lightly to what it teaches about the Anglicanism and Anglican ordinations, even before such issues as the rightness or not of ordaining women to the priesthood is brought into the equation. Against all this there are some firm and positive reasons for seeking to remain within the Church of England [but more of that next month]. **ND**

Oxford Movement, 2008

A priest of our acquaintance was wandering along The High, in Oxford, the other day – well, on the Solemnity of *Corpus et Sanguis Christi* to be precise – when he spotted the University Church of St Mary the Virgin. Mindful of the fact that it was in that historic building that the Assize Sermon was preached on that memorable date of 14 July 1833, he decided to venture inside in order to pray for the repose of him who had preached it: John Keble, Scholar, Priest and Hymn Writer.

It being *Corpus Christi*, he was diverted to notice, on the altar, what at first sight appeared to be a cup and saucer, so he ventured closer to determine precisely what it was. And indeed it was not *just* a cup and saucer.

It was, on closer inspection, a *dirty* cup and saucer, complete with a used teaspoon. In the best traditions of investigative journalism, our informant made his excuses and left, feeling perhaps just a little superior.

As John Keble might have – and indeed did – put it: *What are the symptoms, by which one may judge most fairly, whether or no a nation, as such, is becoming alienated from God and Christ?*



From our Oxford Correspondent

The chaplain of Trinity College, Cambridge, the Revd Alice Goodman (or Mrs Geoffrey Hill, as she seems not to be known) has reportedly provided her pastoral charges (and anyone else who cares to look) with 'Twenty Exam Hints'. These include:

2) *Clock off completely and relax properly at half past ten every night. A glass of wine. Music. Sex. Sleep.*

Who knew there were so many married undergraduates and undergraduates in the Other Place?



The Griswold effect?

On Pentecost Sunday, 11 May 2008, churches around the world dedicated their worship to 'a celebration of our interfaith world'. According to <www.pluralism-sunday.org>, *Progressive Christians thank God for religious diversity! We don't claim that our religion is superior to all others.*

We can grow closer to God and deeper in compassion – and we can understand our own traditions better – through a greater awareness of the world's religions.

Pluralism Sunday is a network of about 370 churches nationwide. Our congregations have adopted a 'Welcome Statement' that affirms that other religions can be as good for their followers as Christianity is for us. Pluralism Sunday is co-sponsored by The Institute for Progressive Christianity, The Network of Spiritual Progressives, and CrossWalkAmerica.'

(In case you're interested, the most popular way of celebrating Pluralism Sunday this year appears to have been by inviting a Muslim to preach or, failing that, a Zen Buddhist. Funny how all that is so right-on turns most of us right off!)



Foreign Correspondent

Writing on Religion for a living must be a pretty stressful occupation, but we hadn't realized quite how stressful. 30DAYS recently came across a blog entry which ran as follows:

I headed off into Mt Coronet on the hunt for Feebas, starting off at Snowpoint City. My search was not ultimately successful. But on the way I decided to check out Uxie's cavern in Lake Acuity to see if it had by a miracle returned. And there it was! I couldn't believe it. I almost fainted myself! (The great thing about writing this blog is that I can use as many exclamation marks as I want!!! After 25 years in national newspaper journalism, where exclamation marks are strictly banned, I'm going a bit delirious with the freedom! I'll stop now... or at least I'll try! I mean I'll really try...!) Anyway I flew quickly back to Snowpoint and switched Swellow for Zubat with mean look so it couldn't escape again, and then caught it using Sneazle and false swipe and just two ultra balls. So now I've got two Uxies. I might trade it, although my son says he wants it. I love my other one. Especially now I've discovered how to combine Dream Eater with Yawn.

That was confusing enough, but then we moved on and read some of the comments:

...thank you so much for the cloning offers, that would be wonderful, what can I offer in return?

Just a bidooof for each will do.

A bidooof? In return for offers of cloning? What on earth is going on? A quick check on Google elicited the intelligence that a bidooof is a retarded looking beaver, which goes some way to explaining everything!

Still, at least Ruth Gledhill's reports from the Lambeth Conference look set to be more challenging reading than she managed back in 1998! (Readers who would like to keep up with our Ruth's interesting sideline should take themselves off to <<http://forums.pokedox.com/index.php?automodule=blog&blogid=257>>.)



Just fancy that!

Last Chronicle, NEW DIRECTIONS, May 2008 (published 2 May 2008):

The nuptials will take place in June at a secret luxury rendezvous in New Hampshire. ('I always wanted to be a June bride', says the media-conscious bishop. 'And we timed it just right for the Lambeth Conference.')

Celeb will be footing the bill for an extravaganza which will bring together friends, well-wishers and stars of stage and screen. The ceremony itself will be performed by Sir Ian McKellen, costumed in his famous role as Gandalf the White from the film *Lord of the Rings*.

The Times, 16 May 2008:

Sir Ian McKellen, who played the wizard Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, is to come out publicly in backing for the openly gay bishop at the centre of the Anglican Church's split over homosexuality. The actor will join Bishop Gene Robinson at a high-profile event to mark the launch of a new film about homosexuality and the Church on the eve of the Lambeth Conference in July. A celebrity cast-list of 900 liberal clergy, actors and celebrities from the film world in Britain and the US are expected at the premiere of *For the Bible Tells Me So* at the South Bank in July. 'This evening will be a celebration of the lives and ministries of gay and lesbian people, on the eve of the Lambeth Conference of bishops in Canterbury', Bishop Robinson said.

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A changing climate

The Revd Dr Edward Dowler compares two authors' views on the causes and consequences of global warming, and concludes that, despite differences of opinion, there is a clear and necessary course of action to be taken

Global warming, or, to give it its more emotive title, climate change, features greatly in the news at the moment. Some branches of the media seem positively obsessed with it. Warming is caused when gases such as water vapour and carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere trap in the sun's heat, and stop it from being reflected back into space. This is known as the greenhouse effect, and thank God for it: if it didn't exist, we would all die of cold. The consensus of opinion, however, is that carbon dioxide emissions caused by human activity, principally the burning of fossil fuels, has significantly warmed the earth in recent years, causing a variety of unpredictable consequences, and that further warming should be expected.

The prophetic approach

Two recent books can help to inform us further on the nature of this process, and the attitude that we might take to it. The first is *A Moral Climate: the Ethics of Global Warming* [DLT, 2007] by Michael Northcott, an Anglican priest and professor at Edinburgh University. Northcott gives what he clearly intends to be a prophetic account of global warming. He draws on an encyclopedic knowledge of geographical and scientific data, and brings our current problems into dialogue with those of the Bible, in particular the Psalms and the prophet Jeremiah. Both of these books, he convincingly argues, have an intrinsic sense that the true worship of God, justice towards the poor and care for the land are intertwined threads. To remove any one of them will mean that the others also become disentangled, and disaster will ensue.

My sceptical first reaction to reading the book was to ask whether a prophetic approach to global warming was necessary, or indeed possible, since this is the currently favoured cause of the liberal western intelligentsia. However, Northcott believes that liberalism is in fact the *cause* of the crisis. Global warming is a symptom of many different problems caused by the way that, in the aftermath of the Enlightenment, we have come to understand ourselves and our relationship to the rest of creation. As Northcott writes, 'at the heart of the pathology of ecological crisis is the refusal of modern humans to see themselves as creatures, contingently embed-

ded in networks of relationships with other creatures, and with the Creator. This refusal is the quintessential root of what theologians call sin'. Thus, the challenge is not to find a technological fix or top-down solution, but to re-envision our relationship with God and the rest of the created order, so as to find a new way to live.

Northcott identifies a knot of interconnected issues, all of which relate to his central rejection of modern Enlightenment liberalism. Among these are: the view that human beings are autonomous

sacramental worship has the ability to remind us of our responsibility to the creation

and sovereign; the loss of a sense that there is a given order in the biophysical world, and that human beings should be humble before it, and not just seek to control it; the way in which globalization has eroded our sense of local identity; and the assumption that economic growth is always good.

To tackle climate change successfully, human beings will need to learn to live in new (in fact old) ways: increasingly local, slower-moving, more rooted in their particular locations and natural habitats, more engaged with one another.

A sceptic's view

A very different reading of the situation is offered by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, in *An Appeal to Reason: a Cool Look at Global Warming* [Duckworth Overlook, 2008], a much more concise volume than Northcott's. Lawson lambasts much of the received wisdom of climate change, pointing out that the small amount of global warming in the last quarter of the twentieth century has been followed by a standstill so far in the twenty-first. Climate change science has become big business, with huge numbers of articles constantly being generated by 'peer-reviewed' scientists. These tend to rely not so much on observable facts as on predictions that emerge from astoundingly complex computer models. He quotes Sir John Houghton with approval: 'when you put models together which are climate models added to impact models

added to economic models, then you have to be very wary indeed of the answers you are getting'.

Unlike the somewhat angular and angry Northcott, Lawson comes over as a cheerful bourgeois technocrat. With an economist's grasp of figures, the key issue for him is the financial bottom line: whether the cost of mitigating climate change would outweigh the cost of adapting to it. In Lawson's view, it would not. Faced with the possible repercussions of global warming, he is confident that something will turn up, trusting in the power of human ingenuity to meet new circumstances when they arise.

Some common ground

In stark contrast to Northcott, Lawson believes that economic growth is always good, and he confidently expects the living standards of everyone in the world to rise. He predicts, basing his figures on the gloomiest of the IPCC's scenarios, 'that the disaster facing the planet is that our great-grandchildren in the developed world would, in a hundred years time, be only 2.6 times as well off as we are today, instead of 2.7 times'. I have to admit that I do not understand what account of human flourishing underlies these figures. Clearly, however, Lawson would see Northcott as naively trying to take us back to a supposedly idyllic pastoral age which would in fact bring high infant mortality, short life-spans, poverty and disease.

Given the stark disagreement between the approach of the two books, I was interested to note three things that they seem to have in common. They are both sceptical about whether the current trading of carbon emissions can produce any benefit. Secondly, their practical programmes for the UK are in some respects similar: they would both shift the tax burden towards carbon emissions, while, taxing other things more lightly to compensate.

The theological dimension

Finally, both writers perhaps underestimate the possibility that we may have reached an oil peak and thus that we may soon run up against severe limits to the energy source that, for Northcott, most fuels environmental disaster, or, for Lawson, propels us towards ever-increasing living standards. Towards the end of his book, Lawson gets theological: